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## Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JON TESTER, a Senator from the State of Montana.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, unite us. Help the Members of this body to work together, finding common ground and resolving differences. Match their fervency with compassion, their zeal with civility. Erase from their spirits all feelings of arrogance or contempt. May they strive to understand and respect each other with a spirit of humility. Lord, make our Senators an example to the Nation of how to strive together for the common good. Give them a fresh burst of enthusiasm for the next chapter in the unfolding drama of the American dream. Energize their efforts with the power of Your spirit. We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable JON TESTER led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, April 8, 2008.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JON TESTER, a Sen-

ator from the State of Montana, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. TESTER thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we will be in a period of morning business, following my statement and that of the Republican leader, with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the times equally divided and controlled between the two leaders. The majority will control the first half, the Republicans the final half.

Then we will begin again the consideration of H.R. 3221, the housing legislation. The first vote today will be at 2:15 this afternoon on a motion to invoke cloture on the substitute amendment to H.R. 3221.

### IRAQ HEARINGS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as we speak, there are extremely important hearings taking place on Capitol Hill. General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker are here. The hearings started 35 minutes ago. Clearly, the eyes of the world will look upon the Senate as General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker testify today before the Armed Services Committee and the Foreign Relations Committee. These two committees are chaired by two of our most senior Senators and two of our most able Senators, Senator LEVIN and Senator BIDEN.

The appearances of these good and honorable men, General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker, are meant to cre-

ate an open, honest, and productive dialogue with Congress on the state of the war in Iraq and the future of military operations in Iraq. I hope it does occur in that manner, that there will be an open and honest and productive dialogue with us. As the American people weigh the testimony and consider the best course of action in far-off Iraq, only two questions matter: First, has the troop surge brought us closer to the day when our troops can come home? Second, is the war in Iraq making America safer? Sadly, by all accounts, the answer to both questions is no.

The stated purpose of the surge, according to President Bush, was "return on success," meaning that if the surge worked, the troops could come home. Now, the President claims success, but where is the return? It is clear to anyone that the violence has surged. Eleven Americans have been killed since Sunday in Iraq. Dozens and dozens more have been gravely wounded, including three dozen in one rocket attack. Attacks on the Green Zone have intensified. That is supposed to be the safest part of Iraq—the Green Zone. The conflict between al-Sadr and al-Maliki shows no signs of progress; in fact, there is deterioration. Has the surge brought us closer to the day when our troops come home? We have already heard General Petraeus has requested a freeze of troop levels and that President Bush is likely to accept that request.

Has the surge brought us closer to the day when our troops come home? Clearly, the answer is no. Has the war made us safer? No.

Military experts agree our Armed Forces are stretched thin beyond sustainable levels. We are taking in—13 percent of our recruits are young men and women who have committed crimes: felonies, violent crime—13 percent. One out of every eight of the people we are bringing into the military

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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